

FINAL

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Council Meeting September 8, 2005 Bethesda in Montgomery County, MD

Attendance:

Members: Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Vanessa Antrum (DHMH), Mary Pat Bromwell (Public), Ben Dubin (Public), Ethelette Ennis (Public), Pamela Jenkins-Dobson (MCHR), Will Johnson (MDHR), George Kosovich (Public), Howard Leonard (Public), Julie Moyer (MDOT), James Tucker (MSD), Sue Griebler for Paul Farrell (MSDE), Rod Wiesinger for Linda Webb (DHCD)

Absent: Lindsay Dunn (Public), Diane Edge (Public), Joshua Friedman (Public)

Staff: Yvonne Dunkle

Interpreters: Erin Harrison, Ms. Tippon, Ms. Blattberg

CART: Tammy Jaffe

Meeting convened at 1 30 pm

Welcome and Introduction

Howard Leonard, Chair, introduced Betsy Leucking, Executive Director for the Commission on People with Disabilities from Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. Betsy Leucking provided the council with an overview of what the commission was currently working on.

Approval of June 2, 2005 minutes:

Howard Leonard suggested one correction of Paul Farrell's name. There were no other suggestions for changes so Ben Dubin motioned to approve the minutes and Vanessa Antrum seconded the motion.

Chairperson's Report- Howard Leonard

Howard Leonard stated that most of what he had to say would be in regards to other things on the agenda, such as the assistant director position, so he would save those comments for later.

Howard Leonard wanted to reiterate the fact that Yvonne Dunkle has been manning the office by herself since Patsy Bowman left. Hopefully with the hiring of a new assistant director, which is coming soon will help Yvonne Dunkle out.

Directors Report- Yvonne Dunkle

1. Status on the vacant Assistant Director position

Yvonne Dunkle asked Howard Leonard if he would like to speak more on the vacant position. Mr. Leonard reiterated about his email to Craig Williams on the discussion of the importance of having a panel of people with different perspectives to interview applicants for the position because of the diversity of the deaf and hard of hearing community. He described how he thought the Governor's Office was not accustomed to the idea of having interview panels for the hiring of new positions within the Governor's Office, but they finally

agreed to a panel of three. The panel would include Yvonne Dunkle, she being the director of the office, himself - Howard Leonard as the chair of the council, and George Kosovich, a hard of hearing member of the council. He suggested that following the meeting the three of them get together to start discussing possible interview dates.

Yvonne Dunkle informed the council that thirty-four applications had been received for the position in total: thirty-two initially, and two that came in late. There was then a screen process to narrow down the applicants and twenty-two of the applications met the minimum qualifications. Howard Leonard then described the rest of the process to be reviewing the twenty-two applications, deciding which to interview, and interview them. Once the interviews were complete, the interview panel would recommend three names to the Governor and he would make the final decision.

Howard Leonard asked if there were any questions or comments about the process from the council and there were none.

1. Status of SB 735, Task Force to Study Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarm

Yvonne Dunkle informed the council that the status of SB 735 was unknown as of this time. She did know that indications had been sent to the appointment office for review and recommendations for members of the Task Force. Also, the House of Representatives had recommended a member for the Task Force, but she had not heard back from the Senate or any other organizations as of yet.

Yvonne Dunkle informed the council that the Task Force would not start working until October 1, 2005. At that time the Office would start working on the logistics to support the Task Force, such as interpreters and CART services, meeting places, and sending out invitations. Ms. Dunkle then asked the council if there were any questions regarding this topic.

Ben Dubin wanted to know if he was correct in saying that it was not the organizations that needed confirmation from the Governor for appointments, but it was the appointments from the public that needed Governor confirmation. He also asked if Yvonne Dunkle had a list of the different organizations that were cited and if they had given an indication of who was going to represent them.

Yvonne Dunkle answered with the fact that as of the last meeting in June, she had sent out letters to different organizations encouraging recommendations for appointments. Several did respond and she needed to follow up on the others. She informed the council that to her knowledge, all names would go to the appointment office and names that were approved would then become members of the Task Force.

Members' Report and Update

1. Driver's Education Issue- Julie Moyer

It was noted that Julie Moyer had not arrived yet and that this issue would be suspended until later in the meeting when she arrived.

Julie Moyer started off by addressing an e-mail she received from Ben Dubin on videos at the fair. MOTOR administrations at the airport were contacted and none indicated that they would have any videos and that maybe it had originally been given by the cruise terminal people. She informed the council that she would be following that up and getting back to them.

Julie Moyer reported that she and John Gaver had recently met with deputy secretary Jim Ports to discuss interpreter services for driving school; they were informed that a complaint had been filed because of a lack of interpreters. Mr. Ports also informed them that as of now, interpreters were not going to be funded by the driving schools because a federal judge had deemed it an undue financial burden. There are still some unknowns as to how the issue is going to be handled. It is a Title III issue, public accommodation. No grant money is going to be provided and MDOT feels that part of the issue is the Department of Education, but no legal action is going to be taken against them.

Julie Moyer encouraged the filing of EEOC complaints under Title III and shared that Larry Wescott from the Glenn Burnie MVA was the new person taking care of these issues, and described how to access a complaint form online under MDOT.

Ben Dubin asked James Tucker of the Maryland School for the Deaf what the process was for them with driver's education and licensure. James Tucker replied that MSD has gone through a couple different processes in the past and as of now they had a driver's education instructor on staff, and are applying for a site license. They are also thinking about purchasing their own cars. James Tucker also informed the council that while there is funding for the transition program for MSD students, there is no funding available for the public. Howard Leonard reminded the council that there had been a suggestion made before of having a group of deaf individuals or people who could sign really well to become certified drivers ed instructors.

George Kosovich mentioned that this issue goes beyond the interpreters, hard of hearing people would need assistive listening devices for both classrooms and in the vehicle.

Julie Moyer suggested setting up a meeting with Secretary Flannigan and some of the members of the council to discuss transition plan for students in the general public and non-students as well. Alexis Allenback and James Tucker volunteered to attend the meeting. Ethelette Ennis suggested an ADA lawyer accompany the group to the meeting and Howard Leonard stated that he wouldn't like to do it initially.

Old Business:

1. Creation of new sub-committees or focus groups for specific issues.

Howard Leonard reported that the report detailing the issues pertaining to the deaf and hard of hearing community had been published in 1987, a total of 139 pages. This report had been sent out earlier that day to each member electronically. He suggested that each sub committee review their section and make comments as to what is relevant and what is not.

There was discussion on whether or not it would be worthwhile to read the report. Vanessa Antrum said she would support reading the report if it were to serve as more support to the office in the future when making recommendations. This was agreed with and Howard Leonard suggested to possibly focusing on the current most important sub committees.

Yvonne Dunkle suggested taking a poll of different consumers and looking at the five year plan in order to find out what the most relevant important issues are at this time. It was finally agreed upon to take a look at the report to see where they had come from as well as looking at the five-year plan to determine priorities.

Before the issue was closed, Yvonne Dunkle shared that she had recently been invited to the MDOD interagency disability board meeting for the first time to represent the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Yvonne Dunkle said she thinks that it will be a permanent position as she sees this as a positive step and hopes that a good relationship will be established between the offices.

New Business:

1. Elections for new Chair and Vice Chair

Ben Dubin was elected as chair for next year and there was a four-way tie between Will, Julie, Pamela and Alexis. Yvonne Dunkle suggested a vote on the four names. It was then decided on that Alexis Allenback would resume vice chair, after the three other nominees stepped down.

2. Relationship between ODHH and MDOD

Yvonne Dunkle reiterated that she sees that the invitation to the MDOD interagency disability board meeting is a good starting point in the development of the working relationship between ODHH and MDOD. These meetings will give ODHH an opportunity to add information on some of deaf and hard of hearing issues in their disability plan and future projects.

3. Change the format of meetings

Mr. Leonard gave the floor to Yvonne Dunkle to talk about format change. She suggested that the topic be held until next meeting because of time constraints.

4. Future meeting dates

Howard Leonard reminded the council that a meeting place had already been decided on for December 1st, in Greenbelt area in PG County from 3pm-6pm, and suggested that meetings for 2006 be decided on at the December meeting.

5. Guest Speaker, JoAnne Knapp of Maryland Department of Disabilities

JoAnne Knapp reported to the council that MDOD is currently working on and with first response providers for emergencies in the state. Currently there are training and drills being held for first responders and it is encouraged to have volunteers from different disability groups participate in this training. A number of these drills have been done already, most recently at BWI with Southwest Airlines, in November in

Baltimore City, one in Prince George's County at Redskins Stadium, and one at Ravens Stadium.

JoAnne Knapp informed the council that there are many conferences that are going on throughout the state dealing with emergency response and that MDOD would really like to have support and input from Yvonne Dunkle and the council, if anyone would like to help contact her. Along with these councils, they are going out and educating thirty different agencies to prepare for emergencies, and looking into emergency response notification systems.

Howard Leonard responded with an acknowledgement of the conferences being held, and a personal experience had at one on the eastern shore. He then suggested that it might be a good idea, since technology was already being looked at, that MDOD should look at some funding like grants available to purchase some of the equipment. This equipment could be housed at emergency shelters so that if they did have a deaf individual there, they could probably access video remote interpreter, if necessary. JoAnne Knapp agreed that this was a good idea but also offered that in lieu of electricity it is being suggested to all first responders to have pen and paper and to all hospitals to have a list of interpreters on hand.

Betsy Luecking announced that in Montgomery County there is a special needs task force with deaf and hard of hearing members who meet with emergency planner. They are piloting an emergency notification program sending information to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and blind. She encouraged all members to get involved with their local emergency planners directly.

Open Forum

Lise Hamlin said that she is working on a grant that will help survivors of Katrina that have relocated to Maryland. She has found that the needs of the people who are deaf and hard of hearing are not being met. Therefore, DHS and FEMA need to be contacted in order to help the local agencies. JoAnne Knapp says that the communication between FEMA and MEMA needs to improve in order to know the needs of anyone's various constituencies. If not there will be several duplication efforts and that will start to water down the system.

Amy Cromrine is the new deaf service liaison for the Howard County Government. She wants to offer services to the public school systems and anyone who needs advocacy services.

Ralena McDevitt wants to offer her services to deaf women who experience domestic violence and sexual assault as well as other kinds of abuse. The biggest issue is inaccessibility to an interpreter. She also wants to give presentations in different communities about deaf people and the proper services needed.

Susan Cohen is the librarian for the deaf and hard of hearing community in Montgomery County Library System. They are co-sponsoring a program for the Self

Help for Hard of Hearing on Emergency preparedness for deaf and hard of hearing people on September 27th @ 7:30 pm.

Michael Moore is a professor at Gallaudet University. He understands that funding is limited, but we still need to make use of existing services. There are a lot of needs not being met and he wants to see how he can help as an individual. Yvonne Dunkle says she would be very happy to meet with Mr. Moore and his group and discuss these different issues. Everyone can be involved and help develop ideas for services and programs from the state level to the local level.

Samuel Jones wants to discuss the TV broadcast problem, Comcast problem, and deaf community. He believes more responsibility with TV broadcast is needed.

Announcements:

Yvonne Dunkle asked for help at the three upcoming events. When helping with the events it was asked to wear the ODDH shirts.

Howard Leonard announced that NAD was having their 125th year gala in Baltimore and for more information to go to the website.

Howard Leonard announced that DORS is going to offer Adult Basic Education and if anyone was interested in teaching or knew anyone interested in teaching to pick up information from him before leaving.